

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of designating a database search path:
the method comprising:
a first step of displaying databases that can be search targets, in the form of figures on a screen;
a second step of designating individual figures and designating the databases corresponding to the designated figures as the first database and the terminal database; and
a third step of carrying out a chain-reactive retrieval of search keys and records by following two steps, one of said two steps comprising is a ~~step of~~ retrieving records by using a search key that is entered into a database and another of said two steps comprising is a step of entering a next search key contained in said retrieved records into next database through the search path candidates.
2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the third step includes the step of displaying the search path candidates in the form of figures by which the figures indicating the individual databases are connected.
3. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the third step includes the step of narrowing the search path candidates down to only those that pass through all of the databases corresponding to designated figures other than the first database and terminal database.
4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim[[s 1]] 2, wherein the third step includes the step of narrowing the search path candidates to only those that ~~do not~~ pass through [[any]] all of the databases corresponding to designated figures other than the first database and terminal database.
5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) A program for causing a computer to carry out a method of designating a database search path comprising steps of:
- a first step of displaying databases that can be search targets, in the form of figures on a screen;
 - a second step of designating individual figures and designating the databases corresponding to the designated figures as the first database and the terminal database; and
 - a third step of carrying out a chain-reactive retrieval of search keys and records by following two steps, one of said two steps comprising is a step of retrieving records by using a search key that is entered into a database and another of said two steps comprising is a step of entering a next search key contained in said retrieved records into next database through the search path candidates.
7. (Original) The program according to claim 6, wherein the third step includes the step of displaying the search path candidates in the form of figures by which the figures indicating the individual databases are connected.
8. (Original) The program according to claim 6, wherein the third step includes the step of narrowing the search path candidates down to only those that pass through all of the databases corresponding to designated figures other than the first database and terminal database.
9. (Currently Amended) The program according to claim[[s 6]] 7, wherein the third step includes the step of narrowing the search path candidates down to only those that ~~do not~~ pass through [[any]] all of the databases corresponding to designated figures other than the first database and terminal database.
10. (Currently Amended) The program according to claim[[s]] 6, further comprising either one or both of the following steps:
- displaying, upon designation of the first database, only those figures corresponding to databases that can be designated as the first

database, on the screen, preferably with a feature distinguishing them from other figures; and

displaying, upon designation of the terminal database, only those figures corresponding to databases that can be designated as the terminal database, on the screen, preferably with a feature distinguishing them from other figures.

11. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the third step includes the step of narrowing the search path candidates to only those that do not pass through any of the databases corresponding to designated figures other than the first database and terminal database.

12. (New) The method according to claim 2, wherein the third step includes the step of narrowing the search path candidates to only those that do not pass through any of the databases corresponding to designated figures other than the first database and terminal database.

13. (New) The method according to claim 1, further comprising either one or both of the following steps:

displaying, upon designation of the first database, only those figures corresponding to databases that can be designated as the first database, on the screen, preferably with a feature distinguishing them from other figures; and

displaying, upon designation of the terminal database, only those figures corresponding to databases that can be designated as the terminal database, on the screen, preferably with a feature distinguishing them from other figures.

14. (New) The method according to claim 2, further comprising either one or both of the following steps:

displaying, upon designation of the first database, only those figures corresponding to databases that can be designated as the first database, on the screen, preferably with a feature distinguishing them from other figures; and

displaying, upon designation of the terminal database, only those figures corresponding to databases that can be designated as the terminal database, on the screen, preferably with a feature distinguishing them from other figures.

15. (New) The method according to claim 4, further comprising either one or both of the following steps:

displaying, upon designation of the first database, only those figures corresponding to databases that can be designated as the first database, on the screen, preferably with a feature distinguishing them from other figures; and

displaying, upon designation of the terminal database, only those figures corresponding to databases that can be designated as the terminal database, on the screen, preferably with a feature distinguishing them from other figures.

16. (New) The method according to claim 11, further comprising either one or both of the following steps:

displaying, upon designation of the first database, only those figures corresponding to databases that can be designated as the first database, on the screen, preferably with a feature distinguishing them from other figures; and

displaying, upon designation of the terminal database, only those figures corresponding to databases that can be designated as the terminal database, on the screen, preferably with a feature distinguishing them from other figures.

17. (New) The program according to claim 6, wherein the third step includes the step of narrowing the search path candidates to only those that do not pass through any of the databases corresponding to designated figures other than the first database and terminal database.

18. (New) The program according to claim 7, wherein the third step includes the step of narrowing the search path candidates to only those that do not

pass through any of the databases corresponding to designated figures other than the first database and terminal database.

19. (New) The method according to claim 12, further comprising either one or both of the following steps:

displaying, upon designation of the first database, only those figures corresponding to databases that can be designated as the first database, on the screen, preferably with a feature distinguishing them from other figures; and

displaying, upon designation of the terminal database, only those figures corresponding to databases that can be designated as the terminal database, on the screen, preferably with a feature distinguishing them from other figures.